

Message Text

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65

ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SYE-00 SSO-00 /018 W

----- 008979

O R 071330Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7965

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

MARSCTYGDBN ARL VA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 3474

DEPT FOR A/SY/FO/DALTON

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, MSG

SUBJECT: CRITICAL MSG SHORTAGE, ISTANBUL

REF: (A) MSG BN MESSAGE 031123Z SEPT 76

(B) PANAMA 6074 (C) BUENOS AIRES 5738

(C) FRANKFURT 6699

ANKARA FOR RSO

FRANKFURT FOR RSS AND RMO

1. AFTER TRANSFER OF SGT D.W. WATKINS (SEE REFTELS) ISTANBUL IS NOW TWO MSG WATCHSTANDERS UNDERSTRENGTH. WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING ONE WATCHSTANDER SHORT SINCE JUNE 1976. THE RECENT TERRORIST ATTACK AT ISTANBUL AIRPORT RE-ENFORCES CONGEN'S BELIEF THAT WE SHOULD BE AT FULL MSG DETACHMENT STRENGTH. ISTANBUL WILLFACE A MUCH HIGHER THREAT LEVEL IN MID-SEPTEMBER WHEN TRIAL OF TERRORISTS EXPECTED TO BEGIN. ALSO UNIVERSITITES WILL BEGIN OPENING LATER THIS MONTH AND MAY BE ACCOMPANIED BY CIVIL UNREST IN TERMS OF RIOTING AND SHOOTING.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 4 SGT WATKINS WAS PLACED ON PLANE FOR BUENOS AIRES BY NCOIC WITHOUT PERMISSION OF CONSUL GENERAL, RSO OR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANY SENIOR OFFICIAL: THUS CONGEN WAS NOT IN POSITION TO

REQUEST REPLACEMENT PRIOR TO DEPARTURE OF SGT WATKINS

3. BACKGROUND LEADING TO NCOIC'S UNUSUAL ACTION WAS THAT UPON LEARNING OF BUENOS AIRES' URGENT NEED FOR PPSU-TRAINED SGT. WATKINS, RSO AND NCOIC BEGAN MAKING TENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS DEPARTURE. STANDBY RESERVATIONS WERE MADE FOR WATKINS ON PAA FLIGHT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5. THESE TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS WERE PENDING APPROVAL OF CONSUL GENERAL. BEFORE CONSUL GENERAL COULD BE BRIEFED ON THESE TENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, NCOIC WAS ADVISED BY PAA THAT IT COULD GUARANTEE WATKINS SEAT ON SPECIAL PALL FLIGHT DEPARTING ISTANBUL AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 4, IF NCOIC COULD BRING HIM TO AIRPORT IMMEDIATELY. WITHOUT PERMISSION TO DO SO FROM CONSUL GENERAL OR RSO
NCOIC PLACED WATKINS ABOARD THIS PAA FLIGHT. NCOIC'S DECISION BASICALLY MADE BECAUSE OF EMOTIONAL STATE OF SGT WATKINS. NCOIC FELT THAT WATKINS, WHO HAD BEEN DENIED EARLY RELIEF FOR MARRIAGE DAY BEFORE, WAS UNDER EXTREME EMOTIONAL STRAIN AND IF HE REMAINED IN ISTANBUL ON STANDBY BASIS MAY HAVE TAKEN UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE AND THEN BEEN SUBJECT OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

4. CONSUL GENERAL AND RSO BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT DEPARTMENT AND MARINE CORPS DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BRING CONGEN MSG DETACHMENT UP TO FULL STRENGTH AND, IF NECESSARY, BY TDY ASSISTANCE

5. PLEASE ADVISE. BATJER

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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